of accounts and suggesting the necessary measures of reform. Mr. Gordon's recommendations made at the time have been generally adopted. The Darbar has now considered it desirable, after a lapse of seven years since the last inspection, to subject the whole working of the Account Department to a further examination and see whether there are any defects to be remedied. At the request of the Darbar, the Government of India have again kindly placed the services of Mr. Gordon at the disposal of the State for a period of six months for the purpose and Mr. Gordon has already arrived and entered on his duties.

MAIN HEADS OF REVENUE.

9. **Agricultural conditions.**—I regret to note that the year was, on the whole, not favourable to agriculture. The total rainfall in 1092 was 13·7 inches less, and the distribution of rain more uneven, than in the previous year. The prices of food grains and the wages of labour were also higher than in 1091.

10. **Land Revenue.**—The net revenue demand fell from Rs. 36,54, 327 in 1091 to Rs. 35,70,933 in 1092. The fall is only apparent and is mainly due to the arrangement introduced in 1092 of including only that portion of the *tharavila* or sale price of Sirkar lands brought under registry, which is actually due for collection in a particular year, in the demand for that year, in lieu of the previous practice of including the whole *tharavila*, the bulk of which as a matter of fact falls due in subsequent years. The collections under current demand amounted to nearly 99 per cent as in 1091. The disposal of *puduval* and transfer of registry cases, as also of cases under the Land Conservancy and Land Acquisition Regulations, showed marked improvement. Satisfactory progress was made in the introduction of the registers and accounts prescribed by the Land Revenue Manual in all the Divisions. With a view to regulate and methodise the inspection of village offices by Tahsildars a set of rules has been introduced in the form of inspection notes to be prepared by them at each inspection. The Supernumerary Dewan Peishkar who was appointed for the settlement of the southern boundary of the Peruvanthanam Desom and the boundary between the Manimala and Kallupara *pakuthies*, has finished his special work. The collection of cardamom tax in four instalments and the payment of the *tharavila* on cardamom lands in nine instead of six instalments were sanctioned by way of relief to the cardamom ryots of the High Range. The rules regarding the grant of lands for coffee and tea cultivation were so amended as to make it incumbent on the grantees to take care of the royal trees on such lands until their final disposal by Government. Since the close of the year, the rules regarding the lease of trees on *poramboke* lands such as public roads, canals, irrigation tanks, and field bunds have been revised so as to safeguard the rights of the ryots who under the old system had planted such trees and enjoyed their usufruct.

11. **Land and depressed classes.**—For the past few years, the question of assigning lands to members of depressed classes for habitation and cultivation has been engaging the earnest attention of Government. Under a previous Government order, about 500 acres of land in the Vilappil *pakuthi*, Neyyattinkara taluk, had been assigned free of *tharavila*, in the names of Pulayas who are members of the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sanghan. This order, which, for a variety of reasons, could not be enforced earlier, was directed to be brought into immediate effect in 1092. A further measure of wider scope and larger utility was also adopted during the year providing for the grant of unoccupied lands at the disposal of Government lying outside forest reserves to Pulayas and Parayas free of *tharavila*. The benefit of this concession is allowed to all Pulayas and Parayas who are subjects of His Highness the Maha Raja, irrespective of their religious persuasion, and the Division Peishkars and the Commissioner, Devicolam, have been specially instructed to pay prompt personal attention to the disposal of applications for lands from the members of depressed classes.

12. **Forest reservation.**—The total area of reserved forests at the end of 1092 was 2,344 square miles and 170 acres and of reserved lands 135 square miles and

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

525 acres. Out of the latter area, 124 square miles and 204 acres have been proposed for conversion into reserved forests and 11 square miles and 321 acres into fuel and grazing blocks. There is practically little scope for further forest reservation in Travancore. In regard to Forest Settlement, it is seen that there are 37 blocks pending enquiry and that 7 more blocks will be ready for enquiry ere long. The question of appointing a full-time Forest Settlement Officer to dispose of these cases at an early date has been under the consideration of the Government and it is proposed to make provision for this appointment in the budget for 1094.

13. **Working plans.**—Detailed working plans have been sanctioned in respect of 271 square miles and 526 acres and are in preparation in respect of 335 square miles and 367 acres, leaving a balance of 1,736 square miles and 557 acres for which the preparation of plans still remains to be taken in hand. At the Forest Conference held in 1092, it was suggested that, in view of the incompleteness and unreliability of the data available, the preparation of working plans on an elaborate and detailed scale would not be desirable at present and that the preparation of simple preliminary working schemes by the officers in charge of the respective Forest Divisions would be sufficient to meet immediate requirements. This suggestion has been approved by the Government as a tentative measure. But the department has been distinctly informed that these simple working schemes should not be allowed to take the place of the regular working plans contemplated in the Forest Code.

14. **Extension of cultivation.**—With a view to the extension of cultivation and the development of traffic on the Western Outlet road which has been made cartable as far as the 35th mile, three blocks of reserved forest adjoining that road, comprising about 3,500 acres, were ordered to be disafforested and assigned for registry under the *puduval* rules. Another area of 2,099 acres, comprising blocks of marshy and low-lying lands included in reserves but not required for purposes of forest conservancy, was also ordered to be disafforested and made available for paddy cultivation.

15. **Other forest items.**—The formation of a separate Plantation Division with effect from the beginning of 1092 has been of considerable benefit to the department, and planting and thinning operations appear to have in consequence received adequate attention during the year. The stock of timber at the close of 1092 in the sale and forest depots was 9,21,334 cubic feet, against 11,85,932 cubic feet in 1091. The balance is still heavy and instructions have been issued for clearing it off with the least avoidable delay. The coupe-sale system, under which select standing trees in a coupe are marked and sold for a lump-sum offer, introduced in the High Range Division in 1091, was extended to the Quilon Division towards the close of 1092. The necessity for passes for the removal of green manure from private lands was dispensed with. Two new fuel depots were tentatively opened at Aramboly and Darsanamkope. Since the close of the year, the Forest Manual, in the preparation of which much useful labour was spent by Mr. K. S. Narayana Aiyangar, Assistant Conservator of Forests, has been issued. This publication is bound to be of great advantage to the department and the public.

16. **Salt.**—Government have been obliged to raise the selling price of Bombay salt to Bh. Rs. 2-11-6 per maund in the Alleppey, Quilon and Trivandrum port salt depots and to Bh. Rs. 2-12-6 per maund in the bankshalls of the Shencottah taluk, with effect from the 26th Vrischikam 1093, on account of the shortage of freight and the heavy increase in the price of the commodity in Bombay. This circumstance once again brings into prominent relief the question of the development of the home-salt industry. With the object of affording protection to the completed factories on the one hand, and, as a precaution, on the other, against the danger of any excessive and sudden reduction in the water-holding capacity of the Manakkudi backwater into which the Pazhayar river discharges itself, the policy of the Government has been to grant lands for salt culture in such a manner as to allow full time for one plot to be worked into a factory before another plot is assigned for that purpose. It is gratifying to note that considerable advance has been made in salt culture in South Travancore during the last decade. In 1083 the areas of salt factories and working pans were 612·48 acres and 219·87 acres respectively and the total outturn of salt.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly